

[2d6]

Roleplaying System

Version 3.0

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What is a Roleplaying Game?

A roleplaying game (often abbreviated RPG) is a game in which players take up the role of a particular character (often called the player character, or PC) within a story. There are many different types of roleplaying games on the market these days, but the type that this book is designed to help you play is generally referred to as the “pencil-and-paper” style of RPG.

This kind of RPG is played without the aid of a computer or game board, and relies on one of the players to narrate the action of the story, as well as manage the non-player characters (NPCs) within the game. This person is called, most frequently, the Game Master or Game Mistress (GM for short).

I’m sure that if you’re new to the RPG scene, the tendency of experienced gamers to reduce long titles to acronyms is a bit confusing, but trust me when I say that it will save a lot of time later on if you can just remember these four:

Roleplaying Game (RPG) – A game in which players take on the roles of characters within a story and direct their actions.

Player Character (PC) – The character that a player controls while playing the game.

Non-Player Character (NPC) – Any character within the story not controlled by a player.

Game Master/Mistress (GM) – The person who creates and runs the game. They also control the actions of the NPCs and make rulings on disputed situations.

RPGs are played for many reasons. Some people like the escapism of adventuring in a world more fantastic and

exciting than their own. Some like to step into someone else’s shoes for a while, to see what different lives are like. Some use them to teach others about historical situations. Some just enjoy the creative aspect of designing and running the game itself. Whatever draws you to the idea of roleplaying, you should keep in mind that while RPGs are a lot of fun, they do require a little bit of set-up before you can play.

First off, you should try to find several other people in your area who are also interested in roleplaying. This is your gaming group. Generally speaking a group of four to six people works best, and if you’re all new gamers you might want to keep the group size small at first (it makes the job of the GM easier).

Make sure everyone reads the rules to whatever game you decide to run. This system, 2d6, is just one of many sets of rules for how you could run an RPG. I, along with a number of my friends, designed 2d6 because we felt a lot of other RPGs on the market today were too complex and took too much time to set up.

Thus, 2d6 is engineered to be simple, quick, and fun, while still allowing you to have a lot of control over the game you’re playing. The entire game can be played with little more than pencils, paper, and two six-sided dice for each player. Character creation, which is discussed more later on, can take as little as ten minutes once you know the rules.

That said, thank you for choosing 2d6, and enjoy your game!

- Josh Gager

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The Basics

If you're still reading this, you've chosen to use 2d6 as your game system – thank you! This page is all about the bare mechanics of the system.

Using 2d6 is a way to introduce randomness to your games. Instead of the players telling the GM what they're going to do and the GM simply telling them how their decisions play out, 2d6 (like many other RPGs), uses dice to add chance to the situation.

Whenever your character attempts something where there's a possibility that they might fail, you roll two six-sided dice and add whatever bonuses you have that are appropriate to the situation (don't worry, there's a lot more about these bonuses later on). This rolling of dice is referred to as making a "check," since you're "checking" to see if your character succeeded.

For instance, let's say that I was playing in a game where my character was a professional chef in Nazi-occupied France during World War II. He's managed to arrange for a certain propaganda minister to dine at his restaurant tonight, and is trying to slip poison into the man's mashed potatoes. The minister has ordered him to cook in front of an audience, so he needs to slip it in without anyone seeing.

Here's where the dice come in:

I would roll 2 six-sided dice (referred to in gamer notation as 2d6, hence the title of this system), and add my bonus from the Sleight of Hand skill, as well as my bonus from the Dexterity stat to the result. This would be called "making a Sleight of Hand check."

If the result of my check is high enough, my chef succeeds, and the minister dines on arsenic. If the roll fails, my chef fumbles the vial of poison into plain view and two grumpy-looking SS officers drag him screaming into the night, never to be seen again.

The number you have to match or beat to succeed on a check is called the Difficulty Class, or DC*. How much you succeed or fail by determines how well or how poorly you did. Based on your roll the GM will choose an appropriate course of events.

And that's the game in a nutshell. There are some specifics you need to learn about creating your character, but the entire mechanic of the game is as simple as this:

GM explains situation, Players react, Players roll checks, GM decides what happens based on checks. Rinse. Repeat.

RULE 0: The most important thing to remember about this game is that it's a game. Use common sense when making rulings about disputed situations. Your GM is running the game, their word is the final word, but GMs: if your players aren't having fun, you're doing it wrong, regardless of the rules.

The next section will tell you how to create your character so you can begin playing the game!

Character Creation

Before you can play any game, you'll need to create your Player Character (PC). This is your avatar in the game world; you direct their actions, decide what they say, do, eat, drink, where they go and who they associate with. There are four (or five) parts to character creation:

Part 1: Stats – a representation of your character's physical and mental aptitude.

Part 2: Skills – how much training your character has in specific fields.

Part 3: Talents – special abilities that distinguish your character from those around them.

Part 4: Starting Items – this depends on the game, but your character may or may not start with objects in their possession.

Part 5: Species (optional) – some settings may allow you to choose from a variety of species.

Each of these will be covered in greater detail on the next few pages.

While making your character, try to think of a backstory for them. Who are they? Why do they do what they do? Do they have friends or family? What about a job? Are they famous? Homeless? Beautiful? Insane? This is the most important part of any roleplaying game. You can be literally anyone that you want. The only restriction is your own creativity.

That said, there may be guidelines for the particular campaign you're playing in (a campaign is a series of adventures that are all connected to form a big story). For instance, you can't be a computer hacker in

a traditional fantasy game, where the level of technology is on a rough equivalent with medieval Europe. Talk to your GM about what kind of setting your game is going to be in and then try to figure out where your character fits into that world. While it doesn't quite pertain to character creation, you may find Table 1 handy.

Table 1: Possible Results of a 2d6 Roll

+	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6	7	8	9	10	11	12

This shows you all the possible rolls for 2d6, as well as how frequently you'll encounter them. For example, the fact that there are 6 ways of getting a 7 means that you have a 6/36, or 1/6 chance of rolling a 7, compared to the only 1/36 chance of rolling a 12. This means most of your rolls will be near 7. **You absolutely don't need to know this information to play, but it can help your understanding of the rules.**

It might help to have a 2d6 character sheet with you when you learn about character creation. It can act as a sort of roadmap that you fit all the information to. A 2d6 character sheet is found at the end of this book.

Stats, Derived Bonuses, HP & EP

Stats (short for statistics) are the numeric representation of your character's physical and mental abilities. They're used to modify your skill checks, as well as for a few other things within the game. There are eight stats in 2d6:

The Physical:

Strength (STR): a measure of your character's brawn, Strength is often used to modify Melee () combat rolls and is a part of their Athletics bonus.

Agility (AGI): a measure of your character's speed and grace, Agility is often used to modify Melee () combat rolls and certain Perform () checks like dancing. Agility is also used to determine a character's Athletics bonus.

Dexterity (DEX): a measure of your character's control over their own body, Dexterity is often used for ranged combat rolls, Sleight of Hand checks, Trade () checks used to craft delicate objects, pick locks, or perform surgery, and some performance checks like juggling.

Toughness (TOU): a measure of your character's overall hardiness, Toughness is used to determine their total Resolve bonus.

The Mental:

Intelligence (INT): a measure of your character's ability to learn, Intelligence is used to modify Knowledge () checks, Language () checks, and Research checks. Intelligence is also used to determine their number of starting languages, whether or not they're literate, their Speech and Notice bonuses, and their starting experience points (XP).

Willpower (WIL): a measure of your character's force of personality and desire to live, Willpower is used to determine their Resolve bonus. Willpower may also be used to modify spellcasting rolls in games that use magic.

Charisma (CHA): a measure of your character's wits and physical appearance, Charisma is used to calculate their Speech score, as well as some Perform checks like storytelling, oration, or singing.

Perception (PER): a measure of your character's senses and the attention they pay to them, Perception determines how many times per day a character can use the "Aim" action in combat and contributes to their Notice bonus. Perception may also be used for some Trade () checks to do things like copying a painting or forging money.

Stats in 2d6 are situational. This means that there is no hard and fast link between a skill and a particular stat. When rolling a check, the GM will choose whichever stat is most appropriate for the situation. For example: a sailor using Pilot to maneuver a boat might add INT to their roll, to represent the years of training they've had learning how to navigate, while a fighter jet pilot might add Dexterity, to represent the split-second reactions necessary for such a task.

All of your stats begin at 0. You then have 16 stat points to distribute among your stats. Each stat bonus costs its numeric value in stat points. This means that if you put 1 point into a stat, it becomes a +1 bonus. If you put two more points into it, it becomes a +2. Three more on top of that and it becomes a +3, which is the highest a stat can go. Table 2, on the next page, might help explain this better. Any leftover stat points

Table 2: Stat Bonus Costs

Bonus	Cost for that bonus	Total cost to get to that bonus
+0	0	0
+1	1	1 (1)
+2	2	3 (1+2)
+3	3	6 (1+2+3)

turn into regular experience points (XP), and are added to the 23XP that you use to buy starting skills and talents (see the next three sections for more information about skills and talents).

As far as what different stat bonuses represent in the real world:

- +0:** below average
- +1:** average
- +2:** above average
- +3:** exceptional

Also, it should be noted that once character creation is done, players cannot buy their stats up with normal experience points (XP). The only way to increase stats after character creation is by purchasing the “Stat Boost” talent.

If you don’t feel like taking the time to calculate out stat points, here are two useful pre-made sets of stats that cost 16 points each:

Balanced: +2, +2, +2, +2, +1, +1, +1, +1

Specialist: +3, +2, +2, +1, +1, +1, +1, +0

Derived Bonuses are made by adding two stats together, rather than adding a stat to a skill. There are four derived bonuses in 2d6, listed below. When you roll one of these checks you don’t add any skill. Instead, you add the appropriate stats that make up the corresponding derived bonus:

Athletics (STR + AGI)

Athletics checks are used to test your character’s physical prowess, from climbing, jumping, and running, to lifting heavy objects. To swim or do acrobatics, the “Swimmer” and “Acrobat” talents must be taken, respectively, as these are learned abilities.

Notice (INT+ PER)

Notice is used to search for objects, pick up on cues like body language, track in the dirt, or faint noises. Notice is used to oppose Stelath, and is used to oppose Speech when a character is being lied to.

Resolve (TOU + WIL)

Resolve checks are used to test your character’s resistance to disease, poison, fear, sleep, drugs, or any form of mind-affecting magic. Resolve also determines the amount of Health and Energy your character has (detailed on the next page).

Speech (INT + CHA)

Speech is used to convince, coerce, lie, or intimidate. It is most often opposed by Notice when being used to lie, but may be opposed by another character’s speech if two opponents are having a debate, or Resolve in the case of intimidation. The “Strongarm” talent allows a character to replace INT with STR when intimidating opponents.

For instance, if a character’s stats were:

STR: +1
AGI: +2
DEX: +1
TOU: +2
INT: +1
WIL: +3
CHA: +0
PER: +1

Then their derived bonuses would look like this:

Athletics: +3 (1 STR + 2 AGI)
Notice: +2 (1 INT + 1 PER)
Resolve: +5 (2 TOU + 3 WIL)
Speech: +1 (1 INT + 0 CHA)

In addition, these derived bonuses can be bought up four times each (to a maximum total of a +10 bonus) by purchasing the “Fit as a Fiddle” “Sharp as a Tack” “Tough as Nails” and “Smooth as Silk” talents given in the Talents section of this book.

Health Points (HP): are a measure of vitality equal to $10 + \text{Resolve}$. HP is lost through combat or other injury. When a character reaches 0 HP, they fall unconscious until at least 1 point of HP is regained. If a character’s HP falls below 0, they must make a DC 7 Resolve check or die. Any further damage causes them to die immediately.

Healing: characters recover any HP that has been lost at a rate of 2 points per day with adequate sleep and food. In less than adequate conditions, this rate is dropped to 1 point per day. A successful Trade (Healing) check increases the rate by 1 point per day. The DC for this check is up to the GM, but is usually based on how badly the character was wounded. Some settings may have magic or technology that can heal HP directly as well.

Table 3: Healing Rates	
Condition	Rate
Sleep & Food	2HP/day
No Sleep & Food	1HP/day
Sleep, Food & Trade (Healing) check	3HP/day
No Sleep & Food, Trade Healing check	2HP/day

Energy Points (EP): are a measure of endurance equal to $20 + \text{Resolve}$. EP is lost through combat, exhausting physical exertion, or sometimes even psychological trauma. When a character reaches 0 EP, they fall unconscious, and remain so until they recover at least 1 point of EP. A character’s EP can never go below 0.

Resting: characters recover EP at a rate of 1 point per hour if they’re not doing anything strenuous like hiking, riding a horse quickly, or working at a Trade. 1 to 3 EP can be recovered directly by a meal, depending on the quality of the food and drink. Only 9 points of EP can be restored in this method per day. Meals take at least five minutes to consume. Some settings may have magic or technology that can restore EP directly as well.

Intelligence, Languages, and Literacy: Characters with a +0 INT begin the game with one free native language that they do not have to purchase via the “Polyglot” talent, and are illiterate. Characters with a +1 INT begin with one free language and are literate. Characters with a +2 INT begin with two free languages, but are only literate in one, and finally, characters with a +3 INT begin with two free languages and are literate in both.

Character Growth

As you play through the game, your character will progressively gain Experience Points (XP) and become more powerful. Each time you complete an adventure, defeat an antagonist, solve a puzzle, or do something generally awesome, you get one or more points of XP (distributed by the GM) that can be spent on skills or talents, as well as on cinematics.

XP for skills and talents:

Starting characters receive 23 XP + a number of XP equal to their Intelligence bonus to distribute among skills and talents (plus any leftover from stats).

A starting character is new to the world of adventuring, and usually only has skills around rank 1 or 2, with maybe a single skill at rank 3 and a talent or two. If your GM wants you to begin play as more experienced characters, try these XP builds:

Table 4: XP builds

Build	XP amount
Starting	23 + INT
Novice	39 + INT
Professional	61 + INT
Veteran	89 + INT
Living Legend	123 + INT

Cinematics:

Cinematics are a sort of magic fix-it button for your character. Characters may spend 1 point of XP to gain a cinematic (all characters start with 0 cinematics). In addition, if a character rolls boxcars (two sixes) while attempting a check, they gain a cinematic.

You can use a cinematic at any point in the game to do one of the following things:

- Deal 3 extra points of damage on a successful offensive combat roll, once per round (this ignores armor)
- Heal 3 points of EP or HP, once per round
- Gain an extra half-round action in combat, once per round
- Reroll any roll, and choose which of the two results to keep, once per round
- Cheat death

Your GM may have other things added to this list as house rules, so check with them before you play. A player can have no more than 3 cinematics at once.

Skills

Skills give you a numeric bonus on rolls that have to do with a particular area of expertise. They're meant to represent training, work experience, or just a general knowledge about a subject.

If a character has no ranks in a skill, they receive no bonus on related rolls, except from their stats. Each rank of a skill costs its own numeric bonus in experience points (XP) to buy, similar to stats. A character can never have more than 7 ranks in any given skill. Each rank a character has in a skill gives them an additional +1 bonus on related checks. For example: A character with 3 ranks in the "Profession (Cook)" skill (which would cost a total of 6 XP to get to) would get a +3 bonus on all checks involving cooking or other chef-like activities. In a realistic setting, only extraordinary people like Shaka Zulu, Simo Hayha, Lise Mietner, or Joshua Norton would ever have skills at rank 7.

Table 5: Skill Bonus Costs

Rank	XP cost for that rank	Total XP cost to get to that rank
1	1	1 (1)
2	2	3 (1+2)
3	3	6 (1+2+3)
4	4	10 (1+2+3+4)
5	5	15 (1+2+3+4+5)
6	6	21 (1+2+3+4+5+6)
7	7	28 (1+2+3+4+5+6+7)

For quick play, here are two skill builds that each use 15 XP:

Balanced: 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1

Specialist: 3, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1

Sample Skills:

Each skill below is accompanied by the stat(s) most commonly associated with it, as well as a brief description of the actions it covers. Skills with a set of parentheses after the name indicate that their are various subsets of this skill. While this list isn't exhaustive, it should cover the basic skills you'll need for most settings.

Skills marked *Trained Only* can only be used if a character has at least one rank in them, to represent the basic knowledge needed to even attempt the task.

Archery [DEX]

Archery is any sort of combat using bows or crossbows (crossbows can also be used with the "Shooting" skill). Archery can be used to attack, but not to defend. Archery is almost always modified by Dexterity. Archery can be defended against by Melee () or Athletics if cover is available. Archery usually has a much longer range than Throwin.

Drive [DEX]

Drive allows your character to operate automobiles or wagons. In some settings you may also need to take the talent "Credentials: Driver's License" as well. Drive is almost always modified by Dexterity.

Knowledge () [INT] *Trained Only*

Knowledge is a working understanding of a particular field. This skill can be taken multiple times, each one applying to a new field of study. Knowledge checks are used to determine if a character knows something, and are always modified by Intelligence. For instance, someone with the Knowledge (Cooking) skill might roll a Knowledge (Cooking) check and add their INT to figure out what wine to pair with venison. Knowledge checks for specific fields cannot be

attempted without at least one rank in the appropriate Knowledge skill. A list of sample Knowledge skills is given at the end of this section.

General Knowledge Checks: characters can always make a general knowledge check to see if they know something, but the DC for a general knowledge check is usually higher by two or three steps than a check for a specific field. For instance, the DC to know which restaurants in town are good would be DC7 for Knowledge (local), but DC11 or 13 for a general knowledge check. A general knowledge check is simply a roll of 2d6 plus the character's Intelligence bonus (no skill bonus applies).

Language () [INT] [CHA] *Trained Only*
Language is used to speak other languages that aren't your native tongue(s). This skill can be taken multiple times, each time applying to a new language. It is a unique skill, in that when a character hits their seventh rank of a particular language, they instead receive the "Polyglot" talent for the corresponding language (this means they no longer have to roll language checks for that language, since they speak it fluently). Without the talent, there is a chance that the character could mistranslate and either discern an incorrect meaning or accidentally say something they didn't mean. Depending on how a character learned the language, they may also gain the literacy talent as well. A character must have at least one rank in the appropriate Language skill to attempt a Language check.

Melee () [STR] [AGI]

Melee combat comes in three flavors: Heavy, Light, and Unarmed. Heavy is any style where blocking is the primary form of defense (large swordfighting, axes, pole-arms, clubs, maces, and anything involving a heavy shield). Light melee is any kind of melee where the primary defense is dodging or parrying. This includes styles like knife fighting, fencing, kali sticks, small sword combat, or anything with a light shield. Unarmed Melee is combat without weapons and could be anything from bar-brawling to Aikedo. Heavy is almost always modified by Strength, Light is almost always modified by Agility, and Unarmed could be modified by either depending on the situation. Each kind of Melee can be defended from by any other, or by Athletics. In addition, some magic may be used to oppose melee checks. This skill can be taken multiple times. Each time it is taken it applies to a different category of Melee fighting. A note: Characters wishing to use two-weapon fighting (considered heavy or light Melee depending on the weapons used) get no special bonuses to combat unless the "Two-Weapon Fighter" talent is taken.

Perform () [Varies, see text]

Perform is used to put on a show. Whether it's acting, dancing, juggling, magic tricks, or music, Perform is often used as a distraction, a morale booster, or a way to make money. The stat that modifies a particular performance varies wildly depending on the nature of the performance. Perform is opposed by Perform (if you want to one-up someone else). Perform can also be used to make money. The GM determines how much money was made with a given perform check.

Pilot [INT] [DEX]

Pilot allows a character to operate a boat, plane, spaceship, giant robot, or other large craft. It is most often associated with Intelligence, but could also be modified by Dexterity in certain situations.

Research [INT] [CHA]

Research can take two forms: looking things up or asking around for information. If a character wants to look up a piece of information, intelligence would be the appropriate stat to modify research. If, however, a person is checking the local gossip, the check is charisma-based.

Ride [AGI]

Ride applies to any kind of vehicle where balance or form is an issue. Skateboards, surfboards, bicycles, horses, and sleds all fall into this category.

Shooting [DEX]

Shooting is used for guns and crossbows (crossbows can also be used with the archery skill). While a character can attack with the Shooting skill, they cannot use it to defend. Shooting can be defended against with Athletics or any form of Melee () if cover is available. Shooting is almost always modified by Dexterity. The range on shooting a crossbow is similar to that of a bow, while the range of a gun is usually longer and varies depending on the gun used.

Sleight of Hand [DEX]

Sleight of hand is used to palm objects, steal wallets, or do other feats of manual dexterity. It is most often opposed by Notice.

Stealth [AGI]

Stealth is used to hide, sneak, or blend in. It is mostly opposed by Notice. If a character makes a successful Stealth

check against another character's Notice before using the Melee (), Archery, Shooting, Throwing, or Intimidate skills, the defender may not add any bonus to their roll in the subsequent defensive check (this includes the Resolve roll to resist an intimidation attempt), they must rely on their luck alone to carry them through.

Throwing [DEX]

Throwing is used both in and out of combat. In combat, throwing covers weapons like throwing knives, slings, and bricks or stones, as well as shuriken, spears, nets, and the mighty trident! Out of combat, it's used for throwing in sports, lobbing grappling hooks onto rooftops, and tossing something to another character over a significant distance. Throwing can be used to attack, but cannot be used to defend. Melee () or Athletics can be used to defend against throwing if cover is available. In general, the range of throwing as an offensive skill is never more than thirty or so feet at the absolute maximum.

Trade [DEX] [INT] *Trained Only*

The Trade skill is used to make physical objects from raw materials or perform a service. Trade is usually modified by Dexterity, though using it to reverse engineer an object, recall a fact relevant to the Trade, or find local information regarding the Trade requires an Intelligence-based check. A list of sample Trades is given at the end of this section. A Trade check can only be attempted if a character has at least one rank in the appropriate Trade skill.

Critical Success/Failure:

If you're making a skill check and you roll boxcars (meaning that the actual dice display a result of 12, or two sixes), you im-

mediately gain a cinematic. You can use this cinematic immediately if you wish. Rules for cinematics can be found in the “Character Growth” section on page 7.

Whenever you roll snakeyes (the dice display a value of 2), however, you automatically fail the check, regardless of how high your bonus to the skill is. The only exception to this is combat, where the results depend on your numeric score.

Aiding Others: If a character wishes, they may attempt to aid another character in a task. Doing this lowers the DC of the task one step, but both characters must succeed on their rolls, or the check fails. Depending on the situation, many characters may be able to help a single character, though they can never reduce the DC below 7 (Easy). Aiding others in combat is a little bit different, and is covered in the “Combat” Section on page 21.

Taking 7 and Taking 12: If a character is able to take their time, and isn’t distracted by anything like danger or environmental conditions, they may act as though the dice displayed a result of 7 (to which they would add the appropriate bonuses) instead of actually rolling a skill check. For instance, if you were searching a room by making a Notice check, you could take 7, meaning that you kept on searching the room thoroughly. You would add your bonus from Notice to the number 7, giving you your check result. Basically this saves you from rolling the dice over and over again until you get at least a 7. This can be done even when there is a penalty for failure, since it only represents a character taking their time and doing something once, very carefully.

If a character can take their time, isn’t dis-

tracted, and there is no penalty for failure, they may “take 12.” Taking 12 works the same way as taking 7, but cannot be done if there is a negative effect for a failed check. For instance, a character could take 12 while searching a room with Notice, but could not take 12 while climbing a wall with Athletics or cooking an omelette with Trade (cook), since a failure in these cases results in a negative consequence rather than just wasted time.

Sample Knowledge Skills:

History, Geography, Biology, Local (must be for a specific area), Chemistry, Survival Skills, Occult, Nobility/Celebrity, Nature, Politics.

Sample Trades:

Carpentry, Ceramics, Sailing, Lockpicking, Engineering, Computer Hacking, Plumbing, Healing, Agriculture, Mechanics, Painting, Smithing, Tailoring, Leatherworking, Travel, Glassworking, Escape Artist, Disguise.

Not all checks that a Trade () skill would modify necessarily require checks. For instance, a character could make soup without any ranks in the Trade (cook) skill, they just couldn’t make a specific kind, and the quality would always be low.

This page has been left almost blank intentionally. The alternative was hours of reformatting, which I'm not prepared to do at the moment.

Cheers!

- Josh

Talents

Talents are special abilities that set your character apart from the people around them. A list of sample talents is provided below. Each talent costs a certain number of experience points, or XP, depending on how powerful it is.

Acrobat (2 XP)

Characters with the “Acrobat” talent can use Athletics to tumble, flip, balance, contort their body, and do precision jumps (like diving through a window or leaping onto a thin beam). Characters without this talent receive no bonus from Athletics on such rolls.

Animal Kinship (2 XP)

Characters with the “Animal Kinship” Talent can use Speech on animals. Normally, rolls made to interact with animals receive no bonus from Speech.

Armor Proficiency (3 XP)

This talent allows characters to use medium or heavy armors to their full benefits. Normally if a character without training tries to use these armors, they only get the DR of light armor, but still incur the full penalties of the armor type that they’re wearing.

Light Armor Specialist (3 XP)

A character with this talent doesn’t take the normal penalty for wearing light armor, but still gains the damage reduction that light armor grants. This benefit doesn’t extend to medium or heavy armor, which both still impose their full penalties.

Beat-Down (7XP)

A character with this talent deals an extra 3 EP damage on a successful Melee (Unarmed) roll to damage an opponent’s EP. This extra damage can’t be traded for combat moves.

Companion (5 XP)

A character with the companion talent has a strong connection with a particular NPC. This could take the form of a spouse, a crew member, a sidekick, an animal, or simply a very good friend. The companion will generally go wherever your character goes, and will also usually follow orders within reason, though if an order would put them into danger or conflict with their morals they may refuse. The GM ultimately controls any companions you may have. Companions should be statted out as starting characters, and they grow and level the way normal characters do. Each time this talent is taken it applies to a new companion.

Computer Literacy (2 XP)

In appropriate settings, this allows a character to use the basic functions of a computer. Data processing, internet use, emailing, and document creation all fall into this category. In some settings (futuristic or sci-fi settings usually), characters might receive this talent for free at the GM’s discretion.

Connections (1 XP)

Each time the connections talent is taken, you may pick one NPC as a connection. This might be a rare art collector, a doctor who takes any case, no questions asked, or a black market dealer who trades in illegal goods. This talent doesn’t mean that the NPC necessarily helps you for free. Rather, they allow rare goods to be obtained at all, common goods to be obtained at a deep discount, and very common or cheap services or goods to be obtained for free. It could also be an informant who gathers local gossip, spreads rumors, or does research for the character, usually for a price. Often this price is information or a favor.

Credentials (2 XP)

A character with the credentials talent has access to an ability or a geographical location that others may not. This could be a driver's license, a cop's badge, or even a college membership. Generally speaking, credentials are anything that requires the character to carry a membership card or badge on them at all times. Each time this talent is taken it applies to a new set of credentials.

Favored Enemy / Culture (3 XP)

Characters with this talent are particularly used to dealing with one species or culture. Once a day they may reroll a failed melee() or diplomacy check against this kind of creature or culture. Each time this talent is taken it applies to a different creature/culture.

Fearless (3 XP)

A character with this talent may reroll all Resolve checks against fear and take the better result, even if that fear is the result of a magical effect.

Fit as a Fiddle (2XP)

This talent increases a character's Athletics bonus by 1. It can be taken four times.

Group Fighter (5XP)

A character with this talent is trained in the art of fighting multiple enemies at once, and as such ignores the normal penalty for group fighting. Instead of only being able to defend against the first attack each round, they can defend against the first three attacks each round.

Hip Shot (7 XP)

Characters with the Hip Shot talent reduce their aiming time to half-round action, rather than the normal full-round.

Improved Combat Move (5XP)

Characters with this talent pick one type of combat move (Trip, Disarm, Shove, or Grapple). The point cost for that move is reduced from 3 to 1. Each time this talent is taken it applies to a new one of the four combat moves given above.

Literacy (3 XP)

Not all characters begin with the ability to read. This talent may only be taken at character creation. However, if your character hits the 7th rank of the language skill, they may automatically receive the literacy talent for that language as well if it is appropriate.

Fast Attack (7 XP)

This talent reduces the duration of an attack to a half-round action, rather than a full-round action (allowing characters to attack twice in the same round). Each attack in this manner may contain up to 10 feet of movement. This does not affect the casting time of magic spells.

Furious Attack (5XP)

A character with the Furious Attack talent may, once per round, make a Melee (), Shooting, Throwing, or Archery attack that, if successful, deals an extra 2 damage (HP or EP) but drains 3EP from the attacker. This extra damage cannot be traded for combat moves.

Polyglot (5 XP)

This talent allows a character to speak one language fluently, without the possibility of mistranslation or misspeaking. When a character hits rank 7 of a Language skill they automatically receive the corresponding Polyglot talent. Otherwise this talent can only be taken at character creation.

Rich (3 XP)

Characters with the rich talent have twice as much starting money as other characters if you're using the slow method of item generation. If you're using the fast method, they receive another special item and each mundane item slot they expend on money or consumables is worth twice as much. This can only be taken during character creation.

Serpentine Pattern (5XP)

Characters with this talent do not need cover to defend against ranged attacks.

Sharp as a Tack (2XP)

This talent increases a character's Notice bonus by 1. It can be taken four times.

Smooth as Silk (2XP)

This talent increases a character's Speech bonus by 1. It can be taken four times.

Stat Boost (7XP)

This talent increases a single stat by one point. It can be taken four times.

Strongarm (3XP)

This talent allows a character to substitute STR for INT when using Speech to intimidate someone.

Swimmer (2XP)

A character with this talent can use Athletics checks to swim.

Tough as Nails (2XP)

This talent increases a character's Resolve bonus by 1. It can be taken four times.

Two-Weapon Fighter (5XP)

When fighting with two weapons at once, a character with his talent deals an extra 1 point of HP or EP damage on a successful Melee () attack. Since a character cannot wield two bows, this talent cannot be applied

to the Archery skill. This talent can be taken multiple times, each time applying to a different offensive skill.

Vicious Parry (5 XP)

When a character with the vicious parry talent beats an attacker's Melee () roll by 3 or more while defending, they may choose to perform one of the following actions on their opponent: disarm, trip, or 5-foot shove.

Detriments:

You may also wish to include detriments in your games. Detriments are disabilities that cause some sort of negative effect on your character, but grant them some extra starting XP or other bonus. A few example detriments are given below:

Blind (+7XP)

Characters with this detriment automatically fail any sight-based Notice checks. However, they may choose another sense (usually hearing or smell) for which their Perception score is always treated as a +3 when making Notice checks.

Missing Limb (+7XP)

Characters that are missing a limb roll twice for all Athletics and Melee () checks and take the worse result. Characters that are missing a limb may never have an Agility score higher than 2 without a prosthesis.

Items

There are two methods for generating starting items. If you're playing a casual game, or you want to get through character creation quickly and easily, then use the fast method. If you're playing a more long-term or serious campaign, then the slow version of item generation is probably more appropriate. Both methods are covered below.

The fast method: Each character begins with one special and ten mundane items. Mundane items are generally things that are cheap, do not give any special powers (other than the damage reduction from mundane forms of armor), or are consumables like food or ammo. Special items either have special abilities, or are significantly more expensive than mundane items. Good examples of special items would be laptops, magic wands that shoot fire, or vehicles. Examples of mundane items are things like a lighter, a quiver of arrows, a tent, or a pocketknife. Armor and Weapons may be special or mundane depending on the particular setting you're playing in. Each mundane item slot can be expended for a preset amount of money designated by the GM. Characters with the "Rich" talent get a second special item, and each mundane item slot they expend is worth twice as much money and twice as many consumables (i.e. if characters normally get 10 arrows per item slot expended, "Rich" characters would get 20). The GM has the final say on whether or not something counts as a special item.

The slow method: Each character gets a set amount of money, designated by the GM. They can buy items from a premade list, also created by the GM. If they wish to buy items that are not on the list, they must talk it out with the GM to negotiate a price. Certain items, like a tree branch or a bag of dirt, might not cost anything

at all. Any leftover money stays with the characters as they begin the game.

Characters with the "Rich" talent start with twice as much money when using the slow method.

Armor & Shields:

Armor comes in three categories, light, medium, and heavy. Armor can count as a mundane or a special item depending on its type and the setting it's in. Armor grants its wearer a reduction of damage (damage reduction or DR) in combat, but also imposes penalties on Agility-related rolls based on its type.

Light armor (leather jacket, oilskin great-coat, animal-hide jerkin, etc.):

Light armor is something that anyone can use. Most of the time it's just heavy clothing, but it could also be lightweight armor like leather or padded cloth. Light armor reduces the damage from each attack done to the wearer by 1 point (This includes Health or Energy damage). The downside to wearing light armor is that it caps a characters Agility score at +2, meaning that even if the character had a +3 Agility score, it only counts as +2 while light armor is worn. Taking the "Light Armor Specialist" talent gets rid of the penalty for wearing light armor. Light Armor Generally has 3HP for the purposes of breaking items (see "Breaking Items" on the next page).

Medium Armor (chainmail, breastplate, flak jacket, etc.):

Medium armor requires the "Armor Proficiency" talent to use. Characters attempting to use medium armor without the proper

training receive only the benefits of light armor, but still incur the full penalty of medium armor. A character who properly uses medium armor reduces the damage from any attack done to them by 2 points. Medium armor caps a character's Agility score at +1 while it is worn, and generally has 6HP for the purposes of breaking items.

Heavy Armor (plate mail, bulletproof vest, personal forcefield):

Heavy armor requires the "Armor Proficiency" talent to use. Characters using heavy armor without this talent only receive damage reduction as though they were wearing light armor, while still incurring the full penalty of heavy armor. Heavy armor functions the same as medium armor except that it grants the wearer damage reduction of 3 points per attack, and caps a character's Agility at +0 while it is worn. Heavy armor generally has 9HP for the purposes of breaking items.

The damage reduction granted by armor does not apply to damage used for combat moves, i.e. a successful attacker first performs any combat moves they declared before the attack, and any leftover damage is then reduced by armor.

Some attacks, like fire or electricity, may ignore the damage reduction granted by certain types of armor. For example, if a person wearing metal breastplate is electrocuted, this damage ignores the DR granted by armor, and damages the character's base HP directly.

Shields:

Shields don't grant damage reduction like armor. Instead, they count as cover for the purposes of defending against ranged at-

tacks. Without a shield a character must either find nearby cover or take the "Serpentine Pattern" Talent to dodge ranged attacks.

Not all characters begin with items. If your game begins in a jail cell or a slave caravan, it's doubtful you'll have access to any possessions.

A helpful hint about items: keep your more permanent items (armor, weapons, tools etc.) on your character sheet, and keep another item list of things like consumables or treasure on the back of your sheet to save room.

Breaking Items: Each item has a set amount of health points HP, given by the GM. A stick might only have 1, while a breastplate might have 6. Characters attack items the same way they attack players (see "combat" below). If an item is held or worn by a character, that character defends as though they were being attacked to determine the result of the combat. If the item is unattended, it receives no bonus to its defensive roll.

For visual learners:

Attacker: $2d6 + \text{offensive skill} + \text{appropriate stat}$

Item (on person): $2d6 + \text{wearer's defensive skill} + \text{appropriate stat}$

Item (unattended): $2d6$

The damage reduction granted from armor doesn't apply to damage done to the armor itself.

Fixing Items: Fixing items requires a day of work per health point fixed, and an appropriate Trade () check of the same trade that made the item.

Creating Magic Items: There are no hard and fast rules for magic item creation, so discuss with your GM what the house rules are for the setting you're playing in!

Item Qualities:

Item Qualities are special qualities that give an item advantages or drawbacks. Items with qualities are often special or expensive items, since they confer abilities to the wielder. Listed below are some sample item qualities with the sorts of items they could be applied to:

Accurate [Sniper Rifle, well-made arrows]:

An accurate weapon allows the wielder to, once per day, reroll a failed ranged attack roll. Accurate weapons must always be ranged weapons.

Brutal [Two-handed weapon, Large-caliber gun]:

A brutal weapon does an extra 2HP damage on a successful hit in combat. It also drains 1EP from the wielder, and cannot be used to deal EP damage. Brutal melee weapons are always considered Heavy Melee.

Burning [Molotov Cocktail, Napalm]:

A burning item causes the target to be set on fire. Targets on fire take 2 points of EP and HP damage per round until the fire is put out (a full round action to stop, drop, and roll).

Effective Bonus [Skeleton Key, Mecha Suit]:

An item that grants an effective bonus allows the user to use the item's skill or stat bonus on a given roll instead of their own. For instance, a skeleton key might allow the user to treat their Trade (Lockpicking) checks as though they had a +3 skill bonus, instead of whatever their normal skill bonus was. Alternatively, a giant suit of mechanical armor might allow the wearer to treat their strength score as though it were a 3 while they are operating the suit. Alternatively, the item might instead give an effective total bonus (the character would not add their own stat or skill, but the item's total bonus). Total bonuses must always be from 0 to 10.

Fire Resistant [Jacket, Blanket]:

A fire resistant item ignores the first point of fire damage taken each round.

Fireproof [Steel Shield, Blast Door]:

A fireproof item ignores all damage from fire or other sources of heat.

Fragile [poorly made sword, binoculars]:

A fragile item breaks when a critical failure is rolled on a check that involves using the item. Fragile items are usually cheaper than regular items of the same kind.

Lethal [knife, gun, arrows]:

A lethal item is any item meant for dealing solely lethal damage. Using the item as normal can only result in a loss of HP, not EP (though using it in another way, such as pistol-whipping someone with the butt of a gun, might still be able to do EP damage).

Lucky [rabbit's foot, penny, horseshoe]:

A lucky item allows its holder to reroll a specific kind of check once per day. For example, a Chef's lucky wok might allow them to reroll a failed Trade (Cook) check once per day.

Waterproof [Bag, Lantern, Coat]:

Pretty self-explanatory.

Protective [forcefield, magic amulet]:

A protective item has a number of HP or EP that the wearer can burn through instead of their own. For example, a magic amulet might have 3HP that can be expended instead of the wearer's own, but when the HP drops to 0, this item breaks. Generally speaking a character can only have one protective item on at any one time, since they would often interfere with one another.

Sharp [Razor, Katana]:

A sharp weapon deals an extra 3HP damage on the first successful attack after a sharpening. Sharp weapons are always considered Light Melee.

Stunning [Stungun, Cattle Prod]:

A stunning weapon deals an extra 3 EP damage on a successful hit in combat, but cannot be used to deal HP damage.

Unlucky [dead ladybug, stolen boots]:

An unlucky item causes the DC of a particular task to go up by one or more steps for whomever is carrying it. For example, a pair of stolen boots might increase the DC of any task that requires surefootedness or balance. This wouldn't necessarily apply to every pair of stolen boots, and is often used as a plot device.

Species

Some settings have multiple species from which to choose when creating your character. If you choose to create your own species, there are a few guidelines to follow:

Description: physical features, and common traits (strong, fast, etc.).

Free Talents: Talents that every member of this species naturally has.

Optional Talents: Talents that this species has access to, but does not need to take.

Sleep Cycle: Diurnal, Nocturnal, or No sleep.

Diet: Carnivore, Herbivore, Omnivore, Insectivore, Mycovore (fungus-eater), Producer (plant), Energy (electricity, heat etc.), Blood, etc.

Reproductive Method: Sexual, Asexual, Magical (like werewolves, vampires, or zombies), or sterile.

Culture(s): A basic description of the culture(s) that is(are) common to this species, if any*.

Lands: If the species is particularly frequent in, or has control over a particular area of land, that information belongs here.

Life Span: Generally speaking, the average length of this species' life.

Example Race: Goblin

Description: Goblins are short, ranging between 2 and 3 feet. Many are agile and dextrous, and stealthy.

Free Talent: Small (reroll stealth, -3 total HP permanently)

Optional Talents: Darkvision (3XP)

Sleep Cycle: Nocturnal

Diet: Carnivorous

Reproductive Method: Sexual

Culture: Goblins are scavengers by nature. Most live in small villages on the edges of larger urban areas and make regular forays and raids into the surrounding countryside. They often ride large wolves into battle, having bred and trained them over the course of generations. Some Goblins adapt to city life by working as beggars or thieves, though a few more intelligent goblins have made good livings as merchants as well.

Lands: Goblins have no racial lands. They are often found in small villages on the outskirts of larger settlements, or squatting in abandoned structures.

Life Span: Most goblins live 20 to 30 years.

Half-breeds

The rules for half-breed characters vary from setting to setting.

*Try to keep in mind that while in some scenarios there would be a single culture within a species, more often than not each species will have multiple subcultures, just like humans do.

Combat

While a good story is more than just hacking and slashing through endless ranks of baddies, combat is often an integral part of RPGs. Because fighting is such dangerous business, it merits a few extra rules:

Combat, at its core, is nothing more than an opposed skill check. However, the manner in which these checks are made isn't the same as a normal opposed skill check.

Rounds:

Combat is done in rounds. Each round is meant to represent roughly six seconds of time. In a given round a character gets a certain number of actions as shown below:

Quick Actions: each character gets **two quick action every round**. Whether they are used or not is up to the player. Quick actions are extremely brief things that can often be done while performing other actions. Drinking something already in your hand, speaking a sentence or two, or performing a passive skill check (like notice or knowledge) are all quick actions.

Half-round Actions: each character gets **two half-round actions per round**. A half-round action is something that takes a bit of time to do, like making an active skill check (not including an attack or casting a spell), getting up from a prone position, drawing a weapon or other item from a belt/bandolier/boot, picking something up off the ground, or moving 20 feet.

Full-round actions: instead of taking their two half-round actions, a character can take one full-round action. This is something that takes a while to do, like retrieving an item from a bag, making an attack, moving 50 feet, or spending a round to aim. A full-round

attack can include up to 20 feet of movement.

Combat Order:

Combat order is determined by making Athletics checks. When combat is initiated, all parties involved roll Athletics checks. This represents how much attention they're paying to the situation, and how quick to action they are. The character with the highest Athletics check result goes first, the second-highest goes second, etc. If two characters should tie, they reroll against one another to see who goes first. This order is set at the beginning of combat and doesn't change until combat ends.

Characters may, on their turn, choose to wait until later in the combat to act. When they do act, this is their new spot in the combat order.

Surprise Rounds:

If any characters are unaware that combat is being initiated, then a surprise round is in order. A surprise round means that any characters who are aware of combat get a full round to act before anyone else rolls initiative, in which the defenders are unable to act. Usually this is the result of a successful Stealth check beforehand.

Combat Roll Mechanics:

When attacking, the attacker rolls 2d6 and adds the appropriate Stat and combat Skill bonus (Melee (), Throwing, Archery, or Shooting). The defender then rolls 2d6 and adds the appropriate Stat and defensive Skill (any type of Melee () skill or Athletics). To both of these rolls the char-

acters add the appropriate Stat modifiers (as determined by the GM).

For the more visual:

Attacker: 2d6 + Combat Skill Ranks + Stat

Defender: 2d6 + Defense Skill Ranks + Stat

For every point the attacker beats the defender by, 1 point of damage is done to the defender.

So, the rolls might look like this:

Attacker:

2d6 + 3 Melee (Heavy) + 1 STR = 11

(this is the result if the attacker rolled a 7, the average for 2d6)

Defender:

2d6 + 1 Melee (Light) + 1 AGI = 9

(if the defender also rolled a 7)

In this case, since the attacker beat the defender by 2 points, they would deal two damage to the defender's Health (HP).

An attacker can instead choose to deal some or all of their damage to the opponent's Energy (EP), effectively wearing them down and tiring them out.

Combat Moves: If an attacker wishes, they can trade a set amount of damage to perform combat moves instead. These moves must be declared before the rolls are made. If the attack succeeds, but is not high enough to pay for the combat move, damage is done normally.

***Distractions:** For 3 points of damage, an attacker can distract the defender, using up one of their half round action in the next round (and thus rendering them unable to take a full-round action as well).

****Grappling:** An attacking character who wins a combat check with Melee (Unarmed) by 3 points or more can initiate a grapple, effectively grabbing and holding their opponent. Grappled characters can only do three things: speak, make passive knowledge or Notice checks, or use the Melee (Unarmed) skill. To break out of a grapple or to turn

the tables and become the grappler, a character must succeed on a Melee (Unarmed) check by 3 points or more. A graplee can be pinned if the grappler succeeds on a Melee (Unarmed) check by 5 or more. Pinned characters are the same as grappled characters, except that to break a pin takes a Melee (Unarmed) check of 5 or more, and then the pinned character is only grappled. Confused? Check out the flowchart on the following page. Any additional damage done on a Melee (Unarmed) check to grapple is done as normal.

Table 6: Combat Moves	
Move	Cost
Disarm	3 points
Trip	3 points
Distract*	3 points
Shove (5 Feet)	3 points
Initiate/Break Grapple**	3 points
Pin (Once Grappled)**	5 points
Break Pin**	5 points
Cause Bleeding and Deal 2 HP damage***	5 points
Incapacitate Limb & do 3 HP damage	8 points
Sever Limb and do 5 points of HP damage	10 points

*****Bleeding:** A character that is bleeding (either externally or internally) takes 1 HP and 1 EP damage per minute until the bleeding is stopped. This is not bleeding from a minor scrape or cut, but from a serious wound like a stab or a severe bludgeon. The DC for a Trade (Heal) check to stabilize a bleeding character is always DC 7. Bleeding continues even after a character falls unconscious. This effect can be applied multiple times. (So that a character that has the Bleeding condition applied twice loses 2 HP and EP per minute and so on).

Critical Hits: In combat, just like with any other skill check, rolling boxcars (2 sixes) means you gain a cinematic. A roll of 2 does not indicate a critical failure, as it would in any other skill check. Simply calculate combat normally.

Aiming: Characters can aim a number of times per day equal to their Perception bonus. If a character spends a full round action aiming, they may roll twice for their next shooting, throwing, or archery check and take the higher of the two rolls. Aiming time can be reduced to a half-round action if the talent “Hip Shot” is taken.

Unconsciousness and Death: A character who drops to 0 EP falls unconscious until they recover at least 1 point of EP. A character who drops to 0 HP falls unconscious. Any additional damage causes the character to die immediately without a save. Characters with 0 HP remain unconscious until they recover at least 1 point of HP.

Total Defense: A character can spend a full-round action to defend, allowing them to roll twice on all defensive combat rolls made in that round and take the better result.

Aiding Others: When two or more characters attack another character in the same round, that character must roll twice on all defensive checks after the first and take the worse of the two rolls. This penalty can be negated by taking the “Group Fighter” talent.

A really, really important note to both players and GMS: This combat system is designed for realism. It is VERY easy to die in 2d6 if you’re using these combat rules. In the real world, something like a barfight would never see a single point of HP loss. Rather, most fights would be EP loss back and forth seasoned heavily with combat moves like Trip, Shove, or Grapple. When characters deal HP damage, they are trying to grievously wound or kill their opponent, and this fact is obvious to any spectators. Also keep in mind that stealth is very powerful in 2d6. This is meant to reflect the reality of combat. If someone sneaks up on you with a weapon, there is very little you can do if they want you dead. Gamers who prefer unrealistic depictions of violence should alter the rules accordingly.

Magic

Whether or not you include magic in your games is entirely up to you. For instance: in a fantasy setting magic might be common, while in a modern setting or a historical game magic would be completely out of place. Below I'll briefly outline a relatively simple approach that you can use if you don't feel like devoting hours to fine-tune your own. Remember, there is no right answer, just what works for you and your group.

Sample Magic System:

Individual Spells are taken as talents, and consume a set amount of EP when cast. The amount of EP consumed for a given spell depends on how common or powerful magic is for a specific setting. A general guideline for spell EP cost based on how much XP the spell costs is given in Table 5 on the following page.

Spells designed to be cast by a single character should always cost between 1 and 7 XP to maintain the balance of the game.

Unless specified in the description, a spell can only be cast on one target at a time. Casting on multiple targets causes the EP cost of the spell to go up by two points for each additional target. The talent "Mass Spell" can reduce this penalty.

When using a spell that can be defended against (whether it's a mind control spell where the target gets a Resolve check to resist or a fireball spell that the defender has a chance to dodge with a defensive combat roll), the caster rolls 2d6 and adds the XP cost of the spell (from 1 to 7) and their bonus from the Willpower stat.

In combat, treat this check as though it were an attack roll for the purposes of dealing damage (though most spells probably wouldn't allow damage to be traded for combat moves). Alternatively, defensive magic spells use this method to determine the caster's defensive roll.

A good way of having casters grow as characters is to include gradually more powerful versions of the same spell with a prerequisite of the previous, less powerful spell. For instance, a new wizard might take a ward spell for 1XP (that only acted as a +1 bonus on defensive rolls), and later on, might buy a more powerful ward that cost 5XP (that acted as a +5 on their rolls to defend with it).

All spells take a full round to cast unless otherwise specified. The Talent "Fast Caster" Reduces the time of full round spells to a half-round action.

It's often a good idea to put things into your campaign that can negate or suppress a caster's ability to do magic. This is a good narrative device for keeping powerful mages in check. In addition, most spells can normally only be used against one target at a time without penalty. This can be increased by taking the "Mass Spell" Talent.

Another good way to reign in powerful spells is to make them cost so much energy that they would require multiple casters. Spells that are intended for multiple casters would still only cost between 1 and 7 XP to learn, but might cost double or triple the normal amount of energy to cast.

Each setting should have its own dedicated spell list to choose from (though the idea of researching new spells that you talk over with the GM during the game isn't unreason-

able for some settings). For an example of a low-magic spell list, check out **Torata**, the fantasy setting for 2d6!

Mass Spell (5 XP)

Casters with the Mass Spell talent are better at casting spells on multiple targets at once. Instead of the EP cost going up by two points for each additional target, it goes up by one point for each additional target (beyond the first). Some spells that affect areas or do not have specific targets aren't affected by this talent.

Fast Caster (7 XP)

The Fast Caster talent enables a magic-user to cast normal spells as a half-round action, rather than full-round action. Spells that specifically say they take longer than a full round are unaffected by this talent.

Faster Caster (7XP, Fast Caster)

Faster Casters can, once per round, cast a spell as a quick action for double the normal EP cost.

Table 7: EP Costs for Spells in Different Settings

XP cost of Spell	EP Cost to Cast		
	Low Magic	Medium Magic	High Magic
1XP	3	2	1
2XP	6	4	2
3XP	9	6	3
4XP	12	8	4
5XP	15	10	5
6XP	18	12	6
7XP	21	14	7

Running the Game

This section is for those brave souls that take on the burden of running the game for their fellow gamers. Being the GM is a big job, but it can be a lot of fun once you know the basics. Running the game is a great creative outlet for those with an active imagination. Even if the role of GM is thrust upon you out of necessity, this section should have enough information to help you keep your head above water when running your own roleplaying game.

DCs: Possibly the most important part of running a game is knowing how high to set the DCs for different tasks. The difficulty of varying DCs are listed in Table 6 by how much of a total bonus the character attempting the check has. Also included, in case you're into statistics, is Table 7, a chart of all the actual percentages that a character will succeed at a given DC with a given total bonus.

Checks listed as "never" are numerically impossible, while checks listed as "always" mean that the character is unable to fail unless they roll a critical failure.

Confused? It's okay. These charts are here as a reference, you don't need to memorize them to play. Any time you're unsure of how high a DC for a specific task should be go through these steps:

1. Decide how tough you want the task to be for that character.
2. Use the character's total bonus on the check (Skill & Stat combo) to find that difficulty level on Table 6.
3. Set the DC accordingly.

There are only six DCs you ever need to remember as a GM:

Easy (DC 7): a task that nearly anyone can succeed on easily

Average (DC 9): a task that takes a bit of effort or skill

Difficult (DC 11): a task that requires a large amount of effort or skill

Professional (DC 13): a task that can only be accomplished by someone with experience

Exceptional (DC 15): a task that requires a supreme amount of effort by a professional

Legendary (DC 17): a task that would inspire local legends for years to come

No task can ever be below DC 7 or above DC 17 (opposed rolls, as in combat, are an exception to this rule, since they are rolling against one another rather than a set DC). In the same vein, **nothing other than a skill and a stat should ever give a direct numeric bonus on rolls.** The mechanics of the 2d6 system are carefully balanced to make character progression even and fair, and adding numeric bonuses throws a wrench into the works, skewing the probabilities and unbalancing the system.

Certain statuses or items may increase or decrease the DC of a task by one or more steps. For instance, characters in medium armor increase the DCs of all Agility related checks by two steps. This means that if the DC for an Agility-related Athletics check (like climbing a wall) was DC7, a person in medium armor would have to roll an 11 or better to succeed (since their bulky armor

Table 8: Likelihood of Success (Unless a Critical Failure is Rolled)

Bonus to Roll	DC7	DC9	DC11	DC13	DC15	DC17
+0	normal	hard	unlikely	never	never	never
+1	easy	hard	unlikely	rare	never	never
+2	easy	normal	hard	unlikely	never	never
+3	mostly	easy	hard	unlikely	rare	never
+4	always	easy	normal	hard	unlikely	never
+5	always	mostly	easy	hard	unlikely	rare
+6	always	always	easy	normal	hard	unlikely
+7	always	always	mostly	easy	hard	unlikely
+8	always	always	always	easy	normal	hard
+9	always	always	always	mostly	easy	hard
+10	always	always	always	always	easy	normal

or if you prefer the hard numbers:

Table 9: Percent Chance of Success (Unless a Critical Failure is Rolled)

Bonus to Roll	DC7	DC9	DC11	DC13	DC15	DC17
+0	58%	28%	8%	0%	0%	0%
+1	72%	42%	17%	3%	0%	0%
+2	83%	58%	28%	8%	0%	0%
+3	92%	72%	42%	17%	3%	0%
+4	100%	83%	58%	28%	8%	0%
+5	100%	92%	72%	42%	17%	3%
+6	100%	100%	83%	58%	28%	8%
+7	100%	100%	92%	72%	42%	17%
+8	100%	100%	100%	83%	58%	28%
+9	100%	100%	100%	92%	72%	42%
+10	100%	100%	100%	100%	83%	58%

makes it hard to move, and causes the DC of the task to increase two steps for them, from easy to difficult). Other conditions that might increase or decrease the DC of a task are injuries, help from others, or distractions. These can never push the DC above legendary or below easy, otherwise the balance of the game gets thrown off.

DCs above 17: there are times when it's appropriate to set a DC above 17. This is usually the case when a task should not be able to be accomplished by a single character under any circumstances. Pushing a massive boulder, for instance, might be a DC 19 or 21 task. Because the DC goes down if more characters help, this task can still be accomplished by teamwork.

Writing for the Players: always try to make sure you include elements in your games that allow each player's individual abilities to shine through, as well as elements that allow the players to work together as a team. My personal advice is not to split up the party too much, since it makes for a lot of bored players while you narrate the individual action of each character, but feel free to disregard this if you find that it works for your group.

Metagaming: metagaming is a term that refers to the tendency of players to talk with one another when their characters couldn't, or to have their characters act on information they wouldn't actually have in-game.

For example, John and Jane are playing a pair of wizards looking for a powerful magic artifact in the tomb of a dead sorcerer. For the sake of efficiency they split up. If John's character gets into a sticky situation and Jane gives him advice on how to get out of it while their characters

are apart, and therefore couldn't talk, that's metagaming. Or if Jane is told by her GM to roll a notice check, and she fails, but then pulls out a wand of blasting because she wants to be ready for a sneak attack, this would be metagaming, since her character didn't notice anything unusual and would therefore have no reason to be on guard. Some people don't mind metagaming, and a little bit of it can help players if they get really stuck, especially if they're new, but I find it's best to discourage too much of it. It tends to break the feel of the game up.

Realistic Enemies: a major mistake many GMs make is having every enemy fight to their last breath. Try to remember that enemies are people too, and fear death like most other people. If an enemy becomes badly wounded, most of the time they should run away or surrender. Only mindless monsters, brainwashed cultists or religious fanatics, and automatons should ever fight to the death on a regular basis.

Bosses: Sometimes you may want to include a "Boss," or extremely powerful entity in your games. Generally speaking there are a few good rules to follow when building a boss. A boss' bonus to any roll should still be between 0 and 10, just like anyone else's. With that in mind, there are a number of ways to make bosses more powerful than players. Giving them lots of HP is one way of doing this. So is giving them an attack that does damage over a large area, often referred to as Area Effects, like fire breath for a dragon. Bosses may also be able to control minions of some kind that serve to distract or disable the players. As a general rule, a boss and their minions should have as much total HP as all of the PCs in the group combined.

Types of Games:

There are two basic types of games, and within those, two sub-types:

Adventure Gaming – Adventure Gaming is when the players have been brought together for a specific reason like saving a noble, stealing a piece of art, fighting off a zombie horde, or trying to escape from a prison. Whatever the case, the plot is fairly straightforward, and is made up by the GM beforehand, though there should always be wiggle room in case a player thinks of something you haven't prepared for.

Sandbox Gaming – Sandbox Gaming is a more free-form, open game style. The GM creates a game world, complete with geography, cultures, organizations, currency, language and history, and then the players are free to do whatever they want in it. Perhaps they'll start a business, or become thieves. Maybe they'll get married or learn how to ride a horse. Whatever happens, it's up to the players. The GM is just there to figure out what happens when they do what they do. Often it's a good idea, as the GM, to come up with a number of possible plots that could be interesting to the PCs and casually slip them into the game to give it direction. Otherwise many players find themselves drifting aimlessly. Sandbox games are certainly tougher to run because you have to think on the fly, but are very rewarding, since they're a product of both the GM's and the players' imaginations.

Within those two styles are two sub-styles: one-shots and campaigns. One-shots are adventures that are designed to be run and finished in one or two gaming sessions. Campaigns are long-term games that could span months or even years in some cases.

One-shots usually focus less on plot and more on action, while campaigns often have a more cerebral, political focus to them. Players tend to get more attached to their characters in campaigns, so be wary of killing them off.

Which brings us to...

Killing Characters: sometimes you have to do it. Every now and then a player will do something remarkably stupid, get in over their head, or simply decide that it's time to put their character to rest. Whatever the reason, when it comes time to kill a character, always do it with panache and style. For instance; which of these two deaths is better?

1.Evil Max stabs Mary-Sue in the back and she dies.

2.Mary-Sue looks down to see the tip of Evil Max's rapier poking through her chest. With a look of confusion and a quiet whimper she slumps to the ground, the life fading from her cheeks.

Number two right? Players want to go out well. If they have to die, make sure that they at least die a well-narrated death.

Overpowered Characters: in many games, players will complain about a particular character in the group being overpowered. I am personally of the opinion that there is no such thing as an overpowered character, only an under-creative GM. Try to find the character's weakness and exploit it. If they're a powerful fighter, give them a puzzle to solve, if they're an unstoppable social dynamo, give them a moral dilemma that could make them lose face in the public eye. If they're a nigh-unbeatable caster,

give them a physical challenge. Whatever the case, if a character seems like they're abusing their power or annoying the other players, don't hesitate to take them down a peg, so long as you do it tastefully.

Making your own Rules: because of the rules-light nature of 2d6, you will often be called upon to make a ruling on a given situation. For instance, there are no rules on drowning in this book. Perhaps you think the player should make a Resolve check. Maybe they can hold their breath for a number of rounds equal to their roll. Or perhaps you think it would be more appropriate to have them simply take 1 point of EP damage every round. It's your call. Just remember to be fair. If all the players at the table complain about a ruling, you should think about changing it. After all, the point of the game is to have fun.

Building your World: in many cases it's fun to play in a universe that's not your own. Whether it's the deep reaches of space for a science fiction game, or a magical fantasy world for something more akin to swords and sorcery, you should give world-building a try. It's an incredibly rewarding and extremely creative process. There are a few things you should try to keep in mind when making your own game world though:

Geography – Every good world has its own geography. Some people like making an overall world map and building inward, while others like to start by making a main city and building out from there. It's your call, but there are a lot of resources online and in books for ideas and help with making maps.

Culture – Are there different sentient species on your world? Some worlds are full of orcs, goblins or strange spirits. Others might include aliens or automatons.

It's your call, but it's generally good to give the players some variety when choosing their species. If you're playing a more realistic game, you may want to treat different societies as different races to represent the different customs and traditions in various cultures. Also, many settings include racism between one or more races or cultures. This can play a big part in the plot.

History – Your game world should have a bit of history behind it if you plan on having any sort of long-term campaign. Big events like wars, trade agreements, natural disasters and political shifts are usually a good place to start.

Language – Most of the time, language plays a major role in gaming. Some characters might even make a living acting as translators or transliterators. Language can provide a very frustrating barrier for characters. After all, no matter how powerful a fighter is, throwing in a language barrier is going to be a challenge. And of course, with language also comes literacy. How many people in your world can read and write? These small details can be crucial.

Money – Is there a unified currency? Multiple currencies? Or do the people of your world barter? Money is important for all the peripherals like items, lodging, food, and services, and can often be a good motivator for a plot.

Magic in your Setting: If you do include magic, there are a few things you may want to do to keep things from getting out of hand.

Powerful spells should always come at a cost, whether it's a long ritual, expensive consumable ingredient, or even the need for

more than one caster to complete the spell. It's also a good idea to put things in your setting that limit or negate magic (as well as things that amplify it). This gives you, as a GM, a nice failsafe in case one of your players figures out how to abuse a spell. While that's not the best way to run a game, it can buy you time until you figure out a better way to solve the situation.

Certain spells that are more vague than others require careful wording of the spell description to prevent abuse. Spells you should pay close attention to are illusion spells or spells that let the player create or transmute things.

There are plenty of other things to consider when building a game world, but these should be enough to get you started.

Inspirational Resources: here are some great authors that you may want to check out:

J.R.R. Tolkien – description, theology

Frank Herbert – politics, human interaction

Terry Pratchett – humor, fantasy, culture

Warren Ellis – technology, politics

H.P. Lovecraft – horror, suspense

Mike Carey – philosophy, theology, morality

Kim Stanley Robinson - hard scifi

George R.R. Martin - politics, war, culture

Lloyd Alexander - storytelling

William Golding - survival, human nature

In addition, as of the writing of this text, there are some great forums online for help designing, running, and playing games:

RPG Net

Giant in the Playground Forums

www.reddit.com/r/rpg

www.reddit.com/r/tabletopgamedesign

www.reddit.com/r/worldbuilding

www.reddit.com/r/2d6

and of course:

<http://2d6game.wordpress.com>

GOOD LUCK!

Credits!

Big Cheese

Josh Gager

Slightly Smaller Cheeses

Mark Ishman
Micah Brandt
Ismaa Viqar
Josh Brandt

Individually Wrapped Slices of Cheese

Joe Busch
Chris Carlino
David Evans
Dave Gager
Linda Gager
Steve Kondrk
Brian Mason
Bryan W. Schuder
Drew Whit

Milk That's Been Left in the Fridge for Entirely Too Long and is a Bit Lumpy

SheepInDisguise
Slashrunner
Vonwalt
Razoroftruth
OrchestraHc
Misaat
JumpJax
Cypherwulf
Michael Moceri
guyev

And all the gamers at giant in the playground forums, rpgnet, and the reddit r/rpg, r/worldbuilding, r/tabletopgamedesign, and r/2d6 boards! Thanks!

2d6

Portrait

STR

AGI

DEX

TOU

INT

WIL

CHA

PER

Player

Character

Height

Weight

Age

Money

Athletics
(STR + AGI)

Notice
(INT + PER)

Resolve
(TOU + WIL)

Speech
(INT + CHA)

Talents

HP EP

Languages

Skills